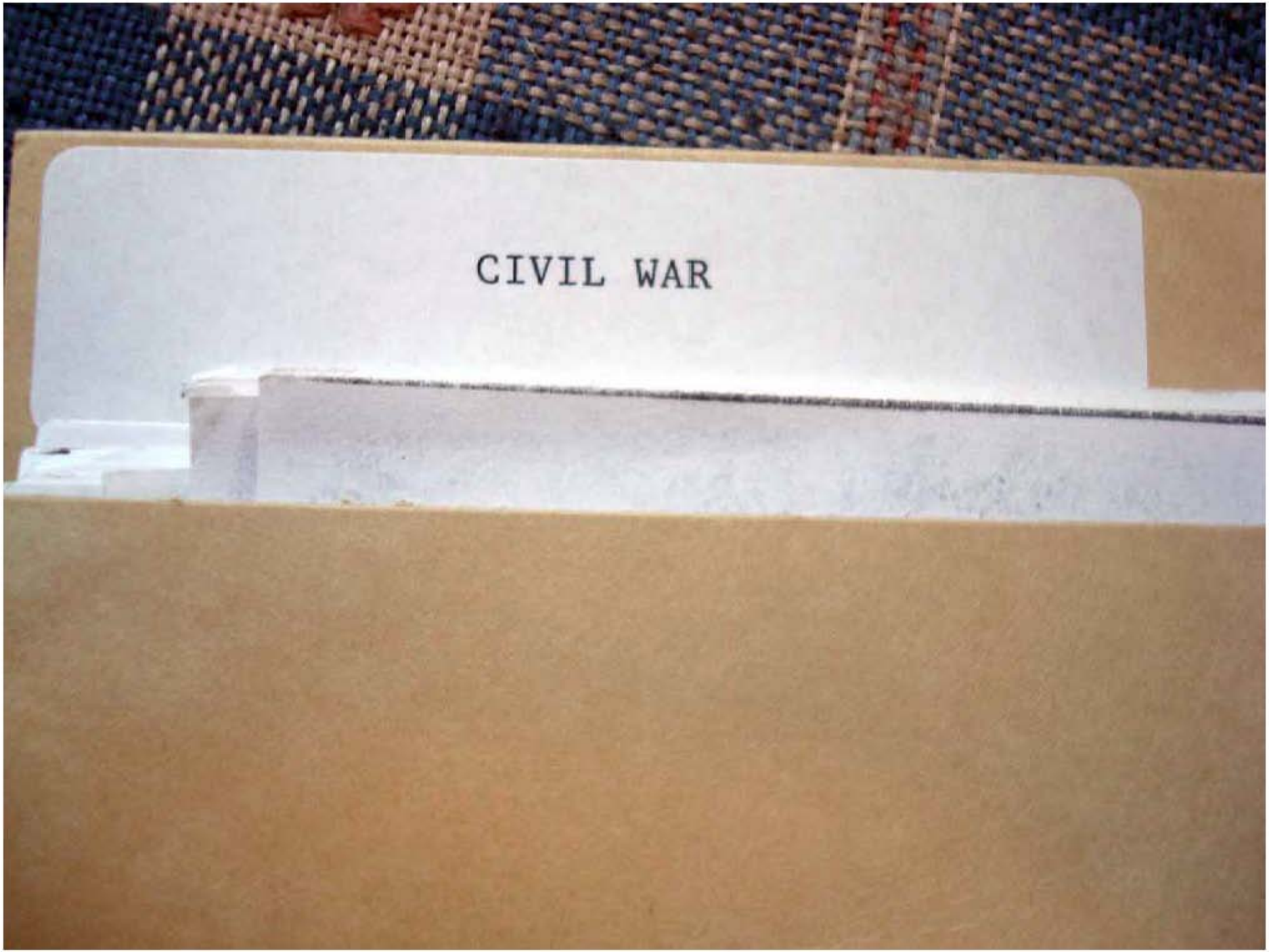
CIVIL WAR

Juanita Dilley
Clover Link, W. Va.

BATTLE OF DUNCAN'S LANE

At the West Union School house at the foot of the mountain, on the road that leads to the Williams River country in 1864, lived Henry Duncan, in a double log house on the headwaters of Stony Creek. William Beverage lived about a quarter of a mile farther up the creek. Part of the passway between Duncan and Beverages was fenced on both sides as a lane. It was this lane that gave the battle its name.

The state was formed in 1863 and in 1864 a regiment of state guards was formed at Buchannon, and of this regiment Pocahontas furnished one company, captained at times by Capt. Samuel Young a minister, and later by Capt. Isaac Walton Allen.

This regiment had its headquarters at Beverley. These state guards were gallant soldiers and were exposed to all the perils and privations of the Civil War. However state guards in other states were placed, those in West Virginia were real soldiers and were the only state guards in the Union eligible for pension.

In 1864 the preservation of the union depended upon the reelection of Lincoln. A peace party had set about to defeat Lincoln, therefore, every vote counted. The county of Pocahontas was controlled by the Confederates, yet the little town of Edray was loyal to the Federal states. Therefore, it was determined by the West Virginia authorities to hold an election for president in the county. Arrangements were made to hold [illegible] guard company was detailed to bring that election off.

They marched on foot from Beverly to Edray a distance of 54 miles coming by way of Elk and reaching Edray a few days before the election. On its wayin, the company camped near the headwaters of Elk River and one of these soldiers. Washington Neff, obtained leave of absence to visit

his wife who was visiting at William Gibsons. Here he was captured by a squad belonging Captain J. C. Gays Company of Confederate scouts and was taken captive to their headquarters at the farm of Samuel Gay. (just above where the Fair ground now is). That night in an attempt to escape Neff was shot and killed. Word of his death reached the company at Edray. Captain Young was in command, Captain Walton Allen was there, too. Every member of the company was a Pocahontas Man. It had been recognized as very dangerous to send one company into Confederate Pocahontas and they were already apprehensive of being in the very heart of this county. The death of Neff impressed them further with the dangers of their position. By this time there was a terrible cloud hanging over Edray district, and a pitch battle was imminent to be fought between men who had grown up together, but who had been schooled for four intensive year in civil war. However, the polls were opened under the oak standing near the home of William Sharp.

The soldiers all voted irrespective of age, and many of the citizens of the vicinity voted also. The vote was solid for Lincoln.

Aaron Moore was chosen as messenger to take the votes into the northerwestern part of the state where the existance of the government of West Virginia wasrecognized. The company of state guards prepared to act as his guard. It was decided best not to return to Beverly by way of the pike (now Seneca Trail). The return was to be made by crossing the river at Marlins Bottom, by Huntersville, and the Hill country, by Dunmore and Greenbank to the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike at Travelers Repose, thence across Cheat Mountain. The company reached Marlins Bottom but when they came in sight of the bridge they saw a Confederate soldier at the end of the bridge on horseback. When the horseman saw the Union soldiers he turned and galloped away. This

was taken to mean that he was a picket on duty and had gone to give the alarm that the northern soldiers were coming. Realizing they were a small company and in a hostile country, and that they might be killed by ambush any minute, they decided to take to the mountains,. It turned out afterwards that the soldiers at the bridge was not a sentinel, but a deserter who was making his getaway to Buchannon.

The little army turned up Price Run and from there climbed Bucks Mountain. When they had reached the top of the mountain they ate a cold lunch and lay down to sleep without starting a fire. At daybreak they marched to the head of Dry Run and called at the home of Peter Beverage, a Union man and obtained food. Then they went to the home of William Beverage, a Confederate sympathiser. These two Beverages were brothers. At William Beverages they took a hive of honey and prepared for the noon day meal.

In the meantime, the Confederates were laying a plan to capture these Union soldiers. Captain J. C. Gay, holding a commission as captain unier the confederacy, with authority to guard the border, summoned his forces and all Confederate soldiers home on furlough to his home. His command at Duncans Lane was made up of about half scouts and half regular soldiers home on furlough.

Godfrey and Adam Geiger of Stony Bottom were among the furlough soldiers to be called. They arrived at Gay's late the evening of the election. Next morning before daylight they were on the trail of the union soldiers. They arrived at William Beverages just in time to see the Union men in the act of taking the honey. The order to fire was given, and a volley let off. The result of which was a scattering of blue coats for shelter. Some went to the hillsides on either side of the hollow, some went down Duncans lane and sheltered behind, Duncans house, and some to the knoll where the West Union school house now stands, and in this way gave battle.

Aaron Moore with the election returns ran up the hillside, and Godfrey Geiger says he would have been killed had he not been in citizens clothes, the rule being to shoot no one not in uniform.

At or about the first fire, Bernard Sharp, a son of William Sharp, fell mortally wounded. He was shot through both hips. Godfrey Geiger says he was carrying an army gun called a musketoon, which took paper catridges. He took aim at Capt. Young who was hiding in a passage between the two parts of the Duncan house. Young afterwards said that the bullet cut away the clothes across his chest. The two little armies continued to fire at each other for about one and one half hours, neither side making a charge.

The Union soldiers gradually withdrew and made their way in little squads to Beverly taking with them the election returns.

When the Confederates found the Union had left the place, they came down Duncans Lane, carried Bernard Sharp to Henry Duncan's house. They sent for a doctor and did what they could for him but he died in a few hours. Other Union soldiers seriously wounded, were John Armstrong, Moffett Walton, John B. Adkinson, William Kennison, James Rodgers, and Moffett Sharp who was shot in the mouth. McClure under the shadow of Red Knob and concealed. They were taken care of by the McClure family. There was no one hit on the Confederate side.

After the battle the Confederates took a bee hive from Henry Duncans and carried it to William Beverages to replace the one taken by the Union men. There seems to have been no cause other than Duncan was for the Union and Beverage for the Confederacy.

These are a part of the names of Pocahontas men who took part in the battle of Duncans Lane.

Union -

Captain Samuel Young
Walton Allen
Lieu. - William Kennison

John Armstron
Privates - William Hannah
William Tay
George Cochran
Clark Dilley
Jeremiah Dilley
Sheldon Hannah
Clark Kellison
Newton Wanless
Moffett Wanless
James L. Rodgers
Aaron Moore
J. B. Moore
Henry Pugh
Aaron Kee
Columbus Silva

Confederates -

Captain - J. C. Gay
Privates- James Shannon
Jacob Simmons
Micheal Willerton
Godfrey Geiger
Adam Geiger
Azri White
Ban White
Charles Moore
Mathias Moore
James McLaughlin
George McLaughlin
Charles Jackson
Jacob Beverage
Harvey Lindsey
George Simmons
Hiram Dorman

No doubt this list is far from complete.

As a battle it does not rank high in the national issue to be decided other than it has a direct bearing on the election of Lincoln a second time.

I The Chronology of Events

1. Monday , November 4, 1864
State Troops arrived at Gray, Neff killed.

2. Tuesday November 5, 1864
Election held at Gray

3. Wednesday November 6, 1864

Battle Duncans Lane

Henry Sharp
Bernard Sharp
John H. Adkinson
George McKeever
Moffett Rodgers
Hanson Moore
Moffett Sharp

From - 1928 West Va. Blue Book
By Andrew Price